

The Increases in mRNA Expressions of Inflammatory Cytokines by Adding Cleaning Solvent or Tetrachloroethylene in the Murine Macrophage Cell Line J774.1 Evaluated by Real-time PCR

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Abstract: The use of a petroleum-derived cleaning solvent for dry cleaning, instead of tetrachloroethylene (perchloroethylene, PCE), has increased. The cleaning solvent may induce immunological alteration. In this study, murine macrophage-lineage J774.1 cells were exposed to the cleaning solvent at 0, 25, 50, and 75 µg/ml or PCE at 0, 400, 600, 800, and 1,000 µg/ml by vigorous vortexing. Cell viability was determined. The mRNA expressions of tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α), interleukin-1 beta (IL-1 β), IL-6, IL-10, IL-12p40 (a dimer of IL-12), and IL-27p28 (a dimer of IL-27) were evaluated by real-time PCR. The mean viabilities in the 50 and 75 µg/ml groups of the cleaning solvent were significantly lower than that of the control. The mean mRNA expressions of TNF- α and IL-1 β in the 50 µg/ml group were significantly higher than those in the control. For PCE, the mean viabilities at 600 µg/ml and over were significantly lower than that of the control. The mean expressions of IL-6 and IL-10 in the 800 µg/ml group were significantly higher than that in the control. The productions of IL-1 β and TNF- α may be altered in human during intoxication of the cleaning solvent as well as those of IL-6 and IL-10 in human during that of PCE, and these may affect on immune cells.

Key words: Cleaning solvent, Tetrachloroethylene (Perchloroethylene, PCE), Macrophage, Cytokine, Real-time PCR

Introduction

The use of a petroleum-derived cleaning solvent for dry cleaning has increased recently. This type of cleaning solvent is currently used more than tetrachloroethylene

(perchloroethylene, PCE) for cleaning, which has been reported for its toxic effects, such as hepatotoxicity, peripheral neuritis, chemical burn^{1,2}. The toxic effects of the cleaning solvent have been considered low, however, the solvent may cause allergic contact dermatitis³. Repeated exposure to the cleaning solvent would possibly induce allergy and inflammation among the workers at cleaning industries.

The roles of macrophages in inflammation and allergy

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have been clarified⁴). Macrophages produce proinflammatory cytokines, such as tumor necrosis factor- α (TNF- α), interleukin-1 beta (IL-1 β), and IL-6⁵). IL-6 is also required for Th17 development which is related to allergic diseases such as hypersensitivity pneumonitis⁶). Macrophages produce IL-12, a heterodimer of p35 and p40 and which plays a role in allergy by inhibiting the development of the Th0/1 toward Th1 lymphocytes⁷). Some of the cytokines produced by macrophages have roles in anti-inflammation and allergy. IL-10 inhibits various inflammatory reactions and the production of cytokines by Th1 cells⁸). IL-10 is an anti-inflammatory cytokines, and induces a predominant Th2 response⁹). IL-27, composed of EB13 and p28, promotes the development of Th0 cells toward Th1 cells and inhibits immune reactions¹⁰). The productions of these cytokines by macrophages may be altered by the cleaning solvent or PCE.

J774.1 cells, a murine macrophage cell line, have been widely used as an *in vitro* model of macrophages^{11–15}). The mRNA expressions of TNF- α , IL-1 β , IL-6, IL-10, and IL-12p40 in J774.1 cells have been confirmed in our previous studies^{11–15}). In addition, IL-27p28 may also be expressed in J774.1 cells. We examined the levels at which the cleaning solvent or PCE altered the mRNA expression of these cytokines in J774.1 cells. This information may be useful for determination of no observed adverse effect level (NOAEL) for these compounds if *in vitro* results are extrapolated in the actual exposure to these compounds.

In the laboratory, exposures of the cleaning solvent or PCE to the J774.1 cells are problematic. These organic materials do not mix well with the cell culture medium. Especially since the specific gravity of PCE is high, it sinks rapidly in the medium, until it reaches the bottom of the polystyrene plate, and finally dissolves it. Therefore, it was necessary to modify the methods for these exposures. Vigorous vortexing may be useful for the mixtures, and glass containers would not be dissolved by PCE. The cell viability and mRNA expressions of cytokines related to inflammation and allergy in J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent or PCE by vortexing were used as indexes.

The objective of this study was to elucidate alterations in the mRNA expression of cytokines in macrophages by the petroleum-derived cleaning solvent or PCE by using J774.1 cells.

Materials and Methods

Cell line

The murine macrophage cell line J774.1 was provided by the Cell Resource Center for Biomedical Research, Institute of Development, Aging and Cancer, Tohoku University (Sendai). J774.1 cells were cultured in Roswell Park Memorial Institute (RPMI) 1640 medium with penicillin G at 100 U/ml and streptomycin at 100 μ g/ml (Nikken, Kyoto) with 5% [v/v] heat-inactivated fetal bovine serum (Equitec-Bio, Kerrville, TX)¹¹). The viabilities of the cells were determined using trypan blue exclusion tests prior to the experiment. Cell populations with $\geq 90\%$ viability were used in this study.

Exposure of J774.1 cells to cleaning solvent and PCE

For the exposure of the J774.1 cells to the cleaning solvent, 15 ml polystyrene tubes and a polystyrene, 24-well, cell culture plate (Iwaki, Tokyo, Japan) were used. For the exposure to PCE, 1.8 cm diameter, flat-bottom, glass weighing bottles (Sansho, Tokyo, Japan), precoated with 0.1% gelatin (w/v) solution, were used. The cleaning solvent and PCE was dissolved in ethanol and diluted in the culture medium. The J774.1 cells were exposed to the cleaning solvent at 0, 25, 50, and 75 μ g/ml in the polystyrene tubes or exposed to PCE at 0, 400, 600, 800, and 1,000 μ g/ml in the glass weighing bottles ($n=6$ per group). The final concentration of ethanol in each tube or bottle was 0.1%. The polystyrene tubes and the glass bottles were vigorously vortexed at least 30 s for mixing. The cells exposed to the cleaning solvent were disseminated to the wells of a 24-well plate. A total of 2×10^6 J774.1 cells was placed on 2.0 ml of RPMI 1640 medium in each well or bottle.

The plates or the glass bottles were incubated in a humidified incubator at 37 °C with 5% CO₂ for 6 h. After 6 h of incubation, lipopolysaccharide at a concentration of 100 ng/ml was added to each well and glass bottle. The cells were then incubated for an additional 6 h for analyses of mRNA expressions of cytokines followed by the previous studies^{11, 13, 14}). The cell viability of each well and glass bottle was determined by the trypan blue exclusion test.

Real-time PCR

Total RNA was extracted from the J774.1 cells exposed to cleaning solvent or PCE after an additional 6-h incubation using RNeasy Mini Kit (QIAGEN, Tokyo, Japan). The cDNA was synthesized from mRNA using a First-Strand cDNA Synthesis Kit (GE Healthcare, Tokyo, Japan). Real-

time PCR was performed for TNF- α , IL-1 β , IL-6, IL-10, IL-12p40, IL-27p28, and glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) housekeeping gene using the Light Cycler System 2.0 (Roche Diagnostics, Tokyo, Japan). SYBER Green I was used for real-time PCR. The sense and anti-sense primers used were 5'-AACCTGC-CAARTATGATGAC-3' and 5'-TCATACCAGGAAATGAGCTT-3' (R is a mixture of A and G) for GAPDH, 5'-ACAAGTGRTATTCTCCATGAGC-3' (R is a mixture of A and G) and 5'-CCACTTTGSTCTTGACTTCTAT-3' (S is a mixture of C and G), 5'-GTTCTCTGGGAAATC-GTGGA-3' and 5'-GGAAATTGGGGTAGGAAGGA-3' for IL-6, 5'-CTCTTCAAGGGACAAGGCTG-3' and 5'-CGGACTCCGCAAAGTCTAAG-3' for TNF α , 5'-GACCAGCTGGACAACATACT-3' and 5'-GAGGGTCTTCAGCTTCTCWC-3' (W is a mixture of G and A) for IL-10, 5'-CTCTGTCTGCAGAGA-AGGTC-3' and 5'-GCTGGTGCTGTAGTTCTCAT-3' for IL-12p40, 5'-CTCTGCTTCCTCGCTACCAC-3' and 5'-GGGGCAGCTTCTTTTCTTCT-3' for IL-27p28¹⁶. The thermal cycles consisted of denaturation at 94 °C annealing at 55 °C for GAPDH, IL-1 β and IL-12p40, 54 °C for TNF- α , 52 °C for IL-6, 50 °C for IL-27p28 and extension at 72 °C. The calibrator normalized relative ratio for each cytokine to GAPDH was calculated as the index of mRNA expression of each cytokine followed by the method and formula previously described^{13,14}.

Statistical analyses

The mean values of cell viabilities, the calibrator normalized relative ratios for cytokines in the groups were calculated. The data of the cleaning solvent- or PCE-exposed groups and the respective controls were compared by ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) followed by Fisher's PLSD (protected least significant difference) test or non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test by using StatView ver 4.51 (SAS Institute, Cary, NC).

Results

Figure 1 illustrates the cell viabilities of the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent at 6 h after the activation. The mean values of the cell viabilities in the 50 μ g/ml and 75 μ g/ml groups were significantly lower than those in the control and the 25 μ g/ml group. Figure 2 illustrates the cell viabilities of the J774.1 cells exposed to PCE at 6 h after the activation. The mean values of the cell viabilities in the groups exposed to ≥ 600 μ g/ml were significantly lower than that in the control. The mean values of the cell

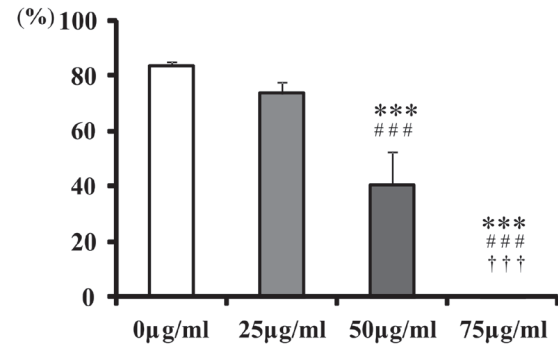


Fig. 1. Cell viabilities of J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent.

The J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent in polyethylene tubes at the concentrations of 0, 25, 50 and 75 μ g/ml and incubated in 24-well culture plates for 6 h. The cell viabilities were determined by trypan blue exclusion test. Each bar represents mean value, and each error bar represents standard error. $p < 0.0001$ by ANOVA. *** $p < 0.001$ (vs. control). ### $p < 0.001$ (vs. 25 μ g/ml). ††† $p < 0.001$ (vs. 50 μ g/ml).

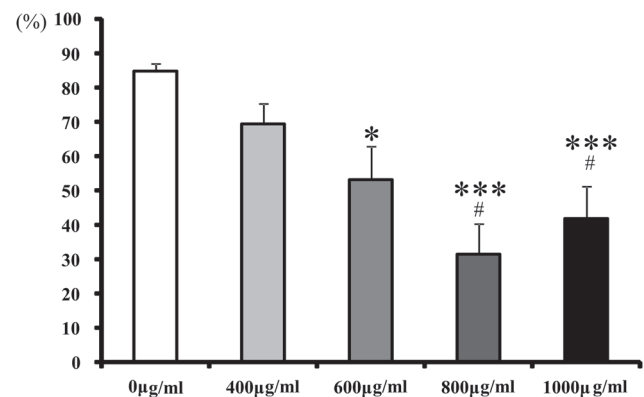


Fig. 2. Cell viabilities of J774.1 cells exposed to tetrachloroethylene (PCE).

The J774.1 cells exposed to PCE in glass bottles at the concentrations of 0, 400, 600, 800 and 1,000 μ g/ml and incubated in 24-well culture plates for 6 h. The cell viabilities were determined by trypan blue exclusion test. Each bar represents mean value, and each error bar represents standard error. $p = 0.0005$ by ANOVA. * $p < 0.05$ (vs. control). *** $p < 0.001$ (vs. control). # $p < 0.05$ (vs. 400 μ g/ml).

viabilities in the groups exposed to ≥ 800 μ g/ml were also significantly lower than that in the cells exposed to 400 μ g/ml. For the mRNA expressions of cytokines in the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent, the mean values of calibration normalized relative ratios are shown for TNF- α in Fig. 3 (a) and IL-1 β in Fig. 3 (b). That for TNF- α in the 50 μ g/ml group was significantly higher than those in the control and the 25 μ g/ml group. That for IL-1 β in the 50 μ g/ml group was significantly higher than those in the control, 25 μ g/ml, and 75 μ g/ml groups. The mean values

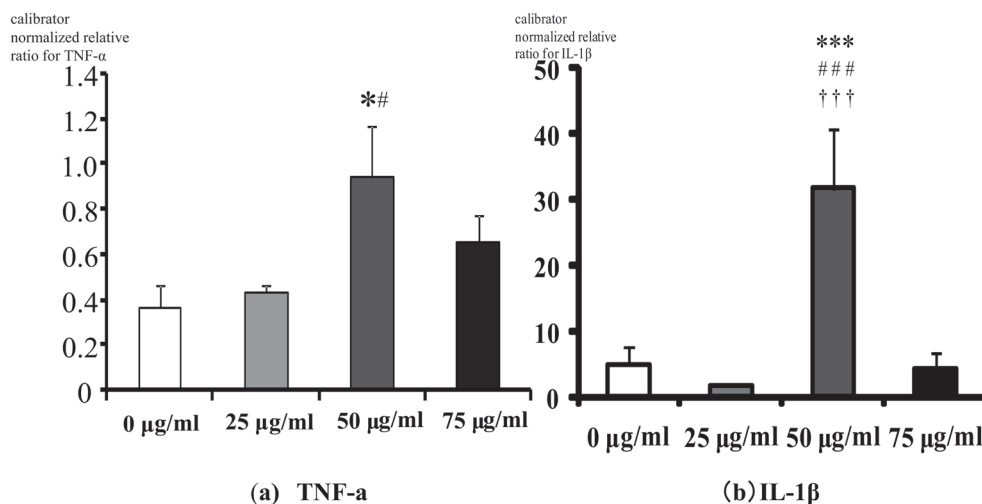


Fig. 3. The mRNA expression of TNF- α (a) and IL-1 β (b) in the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent. The RNA was extracted from the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent for 6 hours. The cDNA was synthesized from mRNA and the real-time PCR was performed for TNF- α , IL-1 β and GAPDH as a house keeping gene. The calibrator normalized relative ratio for TNF- α or IL-1 β to GAPDH was calculated. Each bar represents mean value, and each error bar represents standard error. $p=0.0301$ by ANOVA for TNF- α and $p=0.0007$ by ANOVA for IL-1 β . * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$ (vs. control). # $p < 0.05$, ### $p < 0.001$ (vs. 25 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). ††† $p < 0.001$ (vs. 75 $\mu\text{g/ml}$).

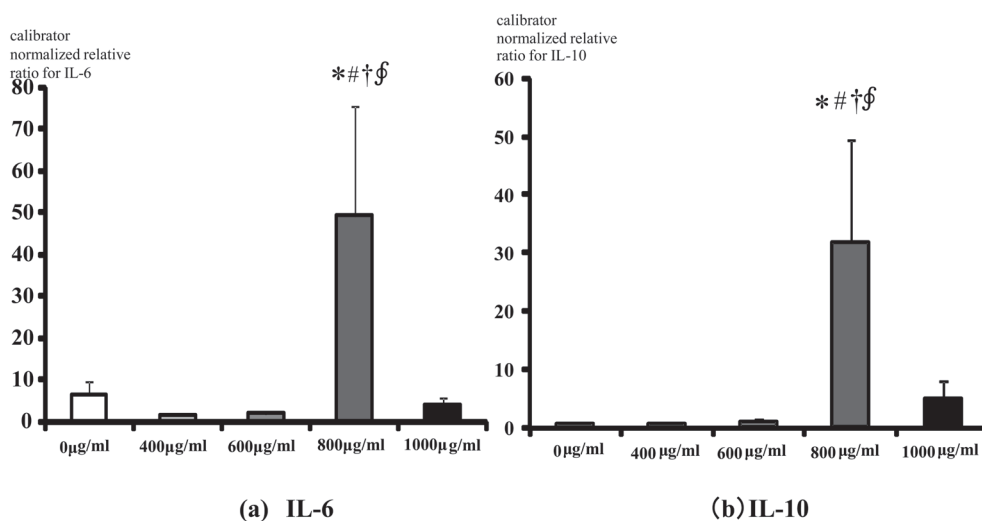


Fig. 4. The mRNA expression of IL-6 (a) and IL-10 (b) in the J774.1 cells exposed to tetrachloroethylene (PCE).

The RNA was extracted from the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent for 6 hours. The cDNA was synthesized from mRNA and the real-time PCR was performed for IL-6, IL-10 and GAPDH as a house keeping gene. The calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-6 or IL-10 to GAPDH was calculated. Each bar represents mean value, and each error bar represents standard error. $p=0.0344$ by ANOVA for IL-6 and $p=0.0455$ by ANOVA for IL-10. * $p < 0.05$ (vs. control). # $p < 0.05$ (vs. 400 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). † $p < 0.05$ (vs. 800 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). ‡ $p < 0.05$ (vs. 1,000 $\mu\text{g/ml}$).

of the calibration normalized relative ratios for IL-10 and IL-12p40 in the J774.1 cells exposed to the cleaning solvent are shown in Table 1. Because the values were not normally distributed, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was applied for the comparisons among the groups.

There were significant differences among the IL-10 and IL-12p40 groups. The medians of IL-10 and IL-12p40 in the 75 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ groups were high. There were no significant differences among the groups exposed to the cleaning solvent for the calibration normalized relative ratios for IL-6

Table 1. Expressions of mRNA of IL-10 and IL-12p40 in the J774.1 cells exposed to cleaning solvent

	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-10		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	0.349 ± 0.127 ^a	0.306 ^b	0.0098 ^c
25 µg/ml	0.145 ± 0.077	0.075	
50 µg/ml	4.024 ± 2.699	0.832	
75 µg/ml	1.637 ± 0.634	1.114	
	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-12p40		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	4.890 ± 2.460	2.297	0.0033
25 µg/ml	0.285 ± 0.130	0.163	
50 µg/ml	13.131 ± 6.111	6.880	
75 µg/ml	11.600 ± 3.209	14.694	

^aMean ± SE, ^bMedian, ^cKruskal-Wallis test.

and IL-27p28 (Table 2).

The mean values of calibration normalized relative ratios in the J774.1 cells exposed to PCE are shown for IL-6 in Fig. 4 (a) and IL-10 in Fig. 4 (b). That for IL-6 in the 800 µg/ml group was significantly higher than those in the 0, 400, 600, and 1,000 µg/ml groups. That for IL-10 in the 800 µg/ml group was also significantly higher than those in the 0, 400, 600, and 1,000 µg/ml groups. These were no significant differences among the groups exposed to PCE for the calibration normalized relative ratios for TNF- α , IL-1 β , IL-12p40, and IL-27p28 (Table 3).

Discussion

The various toxic effects of PCE have been reported in industries¹. It has been known as a primary irritant and induces inflammation in the liver^{2, 17}. Therefore, because of low toxicities of the petroleum-derived cleaning solvent, the use of the cleaning solvent has increased in the cleaning industry. However, Hanai *et al.* (2005) suggested that the cleaning solvent causes irritant contact dermatitis. It is of interest to know which mechanisms work on inflammation induced by the cleaning solvent or PCE. To elucidate the toxicity mechanisms of the cleaning solvent and PCE, it is useful to use an *in vitro* model. J774.1 cells, a murine macrophage lineage, are cultivated relatively easily, and produce various cytokines related to allergy and inflammation. The cell line has been used as an *in vitro* model for macrophages in previous studies¹¹⁻¹⁵. We confirmed the mRNA expression of IL-27p28, which inhibits the production of inflammatory cytokines by various cells¹⁰, in the J774.1 cells in this study. Therefore, we used J774.1 cells in this study, and IL-27p28 mRNA expression in J774.1 cells was used as one of the indexes for toxicity in addi-

Table 2. Expressions of mRNA of IL-6 and IL-27p28 in the J774.1 cells exposed to cleaning solvent

	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-6		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	2.245 ± 1.145 ^a	1.189 ^b	0.473 ^c
25 µg/ml	0.754 ± 0.157	0.732	
50 µg/ml	1.136 ± 0.410	1.102	
75 µg/ml	1.537 ± 0.603	1.070	
	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-27p28		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	0.525 ± 0.122	0.449	0.2419
25 µg/ml	0.557 ± 0.121	0.458	
50 µg/ml	1.761 ± 0.796	1.118	
75 µg/ml	1.457 ± 0.686	0.615	

^aMean ± SE, ^bMedian, ^cKruskal-Wallis test.

Table 3. The mRNA expressions of cytokines in the J774.1 cells exposed to tetrachloroethylene (PCE)

	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for TNF- α		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	3.944 ± 0.518 ^a	3.908 ^b	0.5131 ^c
400 µg/ml	3.056 ± 0.364	2.971	
600 µg/ml	2.439 ± 0.182	2.336	
800 µg/ml	2.699 ± 1.622	1.148	
1000 µg/ml	21.004 ± 19.581	2.229	
	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-12p40		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	5.528 ± 1.647	5.500	0.1317
400 µg/ml	2.767 ± 1.105	1.531	
600 µg/ml	5.042 ± 2.253	3.110	
800 µg/ml	16.538 ± 8.051	7.915	
1000 µg/ml	4.817 ± 1.574	3.100	
	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-1 β		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	7.112 ± 2.090	5.596	0.7207
400 µg/ml	3.658 ± 0.525	3.767	
600 µg/ml	5.492 ± 1.990	2.726	
800 µg/ml	38.327 ± 23.229	6.592	
1000 µg/ml	9.750 ± 5.805	3.936	
	Calibrator normalized relative ratio for IL-27p28		<i>p</i> -value
0 µg/ml	0.680 ± 0.165	0.514	0.8665
400 µg/ml	0.463 ± 0.049	0.437	
600 µg/ml	0.621 ± 0.112	0.564	
800 µg/ml	31.459 ± 26.578	3.429	
1000 µg/ml	8.678 ± 5.900	0.656	

^aMean ± SE, ^bMedian, ^cKruskal-Wallis test.

tion to other cytokines used in our previous studies^{13, 14}.

PCE, which has a high gravity, sinks in the media and, when it reaches the bottom of the polystyrene cell culture plates, it dissolves it. The dissolved material derived from the plates was toxic to the cells. We solved this problem by using glass bottles coated with gelatin instead of the

polystyrene cell culture plates. In the bottles, J774.1 cells adhered to the bottom and were cultivated. The exposure to PCE became possible in the glass bottles. Both the cleaning solvent and PCE are organic materials and are difficult to mix with culture medium. We tried to overcome this difficulty of mixing these organic solvents with the cell medium by vortexing them vigorously. We could observe cell death in high concentrations of these materials. Vortexing was useful for mixing to a certain extent.

Regarding the cleaning solvent, the mean values of cell viabilities in the groups exposed to 50 µg/ml and over were significantly lower than that in the control. The cell death induced at 50 µg/ml could indicate one of the mechanisms that induces irritant contact dermatitis. The mean values of mRNA expressions of TNF α and IL-1 β in the groups exposed to 50 µg/ml were significantly higher than those in the control and 25 µg/ml groups. Because cell death occurs at the level of 50 µg/ml, the cells may express more mRNAs of TNF α and IL-1 β during the process of cell death. The cleaning solvent may induce dermatitis by the increase of the production of inflammatory cytokines at 50 µg/ml. Regarding IL-10 and IL-12p40, which are anti-inflammatory cytokines³, calibrator-normalized relative ratios at 75 µg/ml were higher than those in the control. Although the J774.1 cells may express more IL-10 and IL-12 at this high level, it is noteworthy that the most J774.1 cells were killed. The release of IL-10 and IL-12 from J774.1 cells may not be increased over all. There were no significant differences among the groups regarding IL-27p28, suggesting that this cytokine is not related to the toxicity of the cleaning solvent.

Regarding PCE, the mean values of the cell viabilities in the groups at 600 µg/ml and over were significantly lower than that in the control. Because the gravity of PCE is high, this level should be carefully compared to the level that induced cell death by the cleaning solvent. PCE may be less soluble in the media than the cleaning solvent. Therefore, the concentration that induced cell death may be higher for PCE. Regarding the mRNA expressions of cytokines, only the group exposed to 800 µg/ml showed increases in IL-6 and IL-10 compared with that in the control. However, there were no significant differences among the groups in the expressions of proinflammatory cytokines. IL-6 is a multipotent cytokine that is related to various reactions in addition to inflammation⁴. The toxic effects of PCE such as hepatotoxicity may be mediated by IL-6, which is closely related to hepatotoxicity induced by ethanol¹⁷. The significant increase in mRNA expression of IL-10 at 800 µg/ml may be compensatory for the increased

mRNA expression of IL-6.

There were also no significant differences among the groups exposed to PCE for the mRNA expression of IL-27p28, suggesting no relation to the toxicity of PCE.

Whether or not the decrease in the number of living cells and the increase in the mRNA expressions of the cytokines results in the increase of release of cytokines from the cells remains to be determined. Determinations of the cytokine proteins in the supernatant from the J774.1 cells by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) are needed. However, the mixed solvents media and organic solvents may have interfered with the reactions of ELISA. Separation of the organic solvents from the media may be required to determine the proteins in the media by ELISA.

PCE has been known as an environmental pollutant in groundwater and soil^{18, 19}. The carcinogenicity of PCE was demonstrated in experimented animals²⁰. From these facts, the use of the cleaning solvent has been recommended as an alternative for PCE as a dry cleaning solvent. However, in this study, although it should be careful to compare the levels that induced macrophage death and inflammation between the cleaning solvent and PCE, the level that of the cleaning solvent was 50 µg/ml, which was much lower than that of PCE. Although it is still recommended that the cleaning solvent be used as a dry cleaning solvent in spite of inflammatory effect, to prevent contact dermatitis, the use of the gloves are strongly recommended for workers engaged in the dry cleaning process. It is also necessary to be careful regarding the residue on the clothes processed using the cleaning solvent for dry cleaning workers and customers.

The mRNA expressions of various cytokines including IL-27p28 in J774.1 cells were confirmed in this study, which may be useful for the evaluation of other toxic materials. In further studies, evaluation using epidemic cells or T lymphocytes may be useful for elucidation of the mechanism of irritant contact dermatitis related to cleaning solvent.

In this study, the increases in cell death and mRNA expressions of inflammatory cytokines detected by real-time PCR in the J774.1 cells induced by the cleaning solvent were observed. These effects may be related to the onset irritant contact dermatitis induced by the cleaning solvent. For PCE, the increase in the mRNA expression of IL-6 was induced, which may be related to hepatotoxicity.

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